



Bundeskriminalamt

**60 Years of the BKA:
The Field of Contention between Freedom and Security**

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**Development of the relationship between freedom and
security from the 1970's to the present day – a retrospective
view from a political angle**

Abstract

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In the 1960's and 1970's, Germany was still affected by the National Socialist legacy in terms of human resources and ideas. This impaired the democratic plausibility of the institutions of the democratic rule-of-law state, especially in the eyes of the youth. The dispute about the National Socialist past was one reason for the strong emotionality during the domestic political disputes starting in 1967/68. Another reason for it could be found in the ideological and military threat posed by the communist Soviet Union and its allies. Due to the division of Germany, the discussions on the perception of foreign and domestic political threats merged in a particular way.

The debate about the National Socialist past on the one hand and the accusation of knowingly or unwittingly playing into the hands of the Communists as opponents of the free and democratic basic order on the other hand contaminated the domestic political atmosphere.

When parts of the student movement became radical, the question of an appropriate form of dealing with strategies of violence arose increasingly. Depending on their attitude to Communism, strategies of violence and the state of Israel, the left-wing radical and left-wing reformist currents among the youth parted company as of 1969. In 1975, there was then a public breach between the representatives of the undogmatic left and the terrorist groups. These ideological conflicts within the left-wing scene deprived the terrorists of their entourage of sympathizers. For the combat of strategies of violence, this ideological debate was as important as the prosecution of terrorist groups by the police.

During the Cold War, the question always arose to what extent a co-operation with the communists and the states and organisations marked by them was legitimate in the interest of peace and human rights and where it would border on a kind of camaraderie. This controversy continues to concern us today. Nowadays, however, it is no longer a dispute about acute threats to the security and freedom of the Federal Republic but rather a legitimate debate belonging to the process of confronting and trying to comprehend the legacy of Germany's second dictatorship. Like the debate about our national socialist past, the discussion about the legacy of the GDR is also controversial.

In spite of all mistakes made when confronting the National Socialist and the GDR past, the results today are clear: In Germany, we live in a stable democracy with institutions of a free constitutional state which can meanwhile look back on their own democratic tradition. As much as we are feeling a sense of shame for parts of our history, we can be proud of this success. Today, the question of appropriate constitutional instruments for securing our freedom arises from a different perspective than during the first decades following World War II. But in view of new threats, the question is in principle going to prevail.